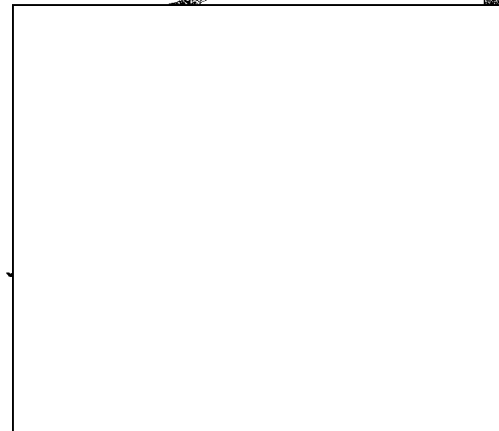
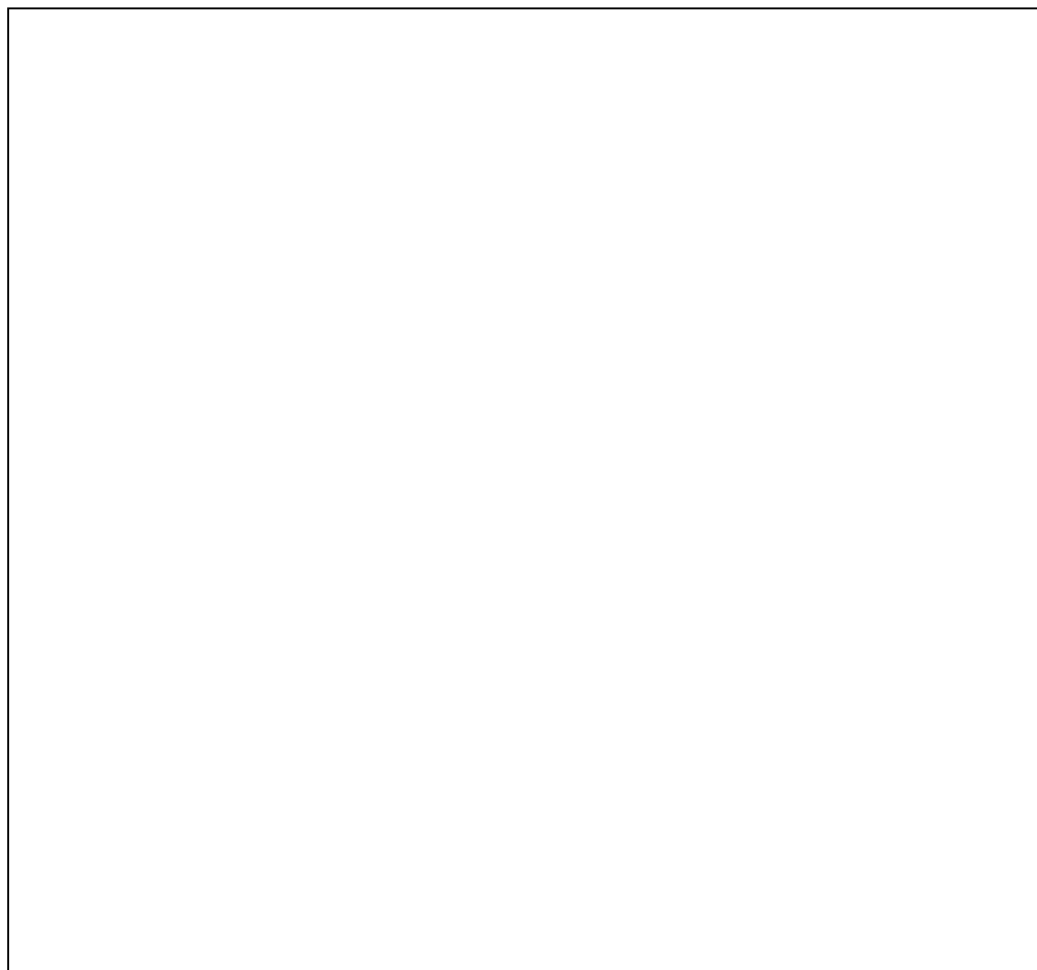


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
National Foreign Assessment Center
26 October 1977

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

FRETILIN's Situation and Prospects

The Revolutionary Movement for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) seems to have been plagued from the start by centrifugal tendencies which has weakened its leadership. Some members of its Central Committee fled the Indonesian invasion of December, 1975, and set up shop in Mozambique. Itinerant FRETILIN representatives seeking aid abroad have had little contact with the leaders of the struggle in Timor. The result has been de facto policy pronouncements on the part of those Central Committee members abroad which have apparently been at odds with the policy aims of the leadership in Timor. A recent leadership purge may help to unify FRETILIN, but its limited external support and Indonesia's superior military strength obviously preclude a FRETILIN victory. But the resistance movement in East Timor is likely to continue for the foreseeable future a political embarrassment to Jakarta and a continuing drain on its resources.

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis.

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Problems in the Leadership

Prior to September, FRETILIN had two fronts: the government and soldiers within East Timor, and representatives abroad who sought diplomatic and military support. The recent leadership change appears to have been a purge of a faction--within and abroad--which was willing to attempt some accommodation with Jakarta. The leading advocate of this more moderate approach was the former FRETILIN President, Xavier do Amaral--removed from office in early September and now reported to be dead. It is likely that this change will result in a continued strident posture towards Indonesia at the UN and continued resistance in East Timor.

Although the present FRETILIN explanation for Amaral's downfall was treason, it is more likely that Amaral's desire for moderation angered the hardline element of the FRETILIN Central Committee. This conciliatory approach was imbedded in the draft resolution that Ramos Horta--a former member of the FRETILIN leadership council and a friend of Amaral's who has been demoted in rank--presented to the Committee of 24 at the UN last August. The resolution refrained from past attacks on Jakarta and called for both Indonesian and FRETILIN forces to observe a ceasefire and facilitate visits by independent observers.

In deposing Amaral, the more vehement FRETILIN leadership has achieved two objectives:

- It has consolidated power at home by expelling all overseas members of the Central Committee who were forced to flee following the Indonesian invasion of December, 1975. This change may help to erase the image of FRETILIN as a disunified government-in-exile and will probably result in a more coherently enunciated policy emanating from within East Timor.
- It has rejected any approach which gives the appearance of FRETILIN responsibility for the instigation of hostilities in East Timor.

FRETILIN's Military Fortunes

FRETILIN's military situation has deteriorated in the last few months -- the dry season permitting more aggressive and wide-ranging operations by Indonesian forces which were augmented in late August. Nonetheless, though the Indonesian army now controls the towns and main lines of communication and will probably make further gains in the remaining three months of the dry season, they are not likely to eliminate FRETILIN resistance in the near future. In the past, FRETILIN has been able to strengthen its position during the wet season, and this pattern is likely to repeat itself again.

We estimate the armed FRETILIN guerrilla force to currently number between 500-1000, operating in scattered bands from remote rural bases. The latest reports of military casualties on both sides -- relatively light but presumably working to Indonesian advantage given the greater strength of their forces -- indicate that FRETILIN forces continue to mount effective guerrilla operations which take their toll of the badly-trained Indonesian forces.

Moreover, FRETILIN seems to have a reservoir of recruiting strength Jakarta's propaganda campaign for village support and its offers of amnesty to the guerrillas have had little apparent success -- the pacification effort clearly hampered by the indifference or alienation of the local tribes.

External Support

FRETILIN's prospects are seriously hampered by the lack of external support. Although FRETILIN representatives have made the rounds of communist and other third world countries in

search of aid, there is no evidence that they have received anything but moral support. [REDACTED]

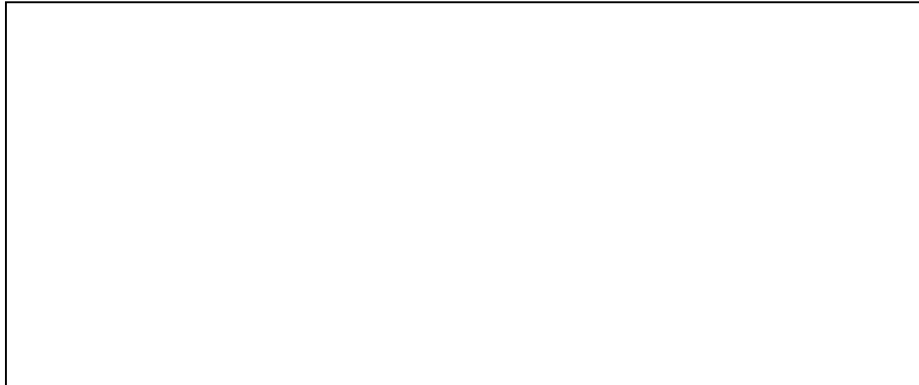
[REDACTED] FRETILIN's forces were receiving outside arms and equipment, and it is possible that small amounts of supplies are smuggled into Timor. Nonetheless, it appears that the FRETILIN guerrillas are largely dependent on arms and ammunition captured in attacks on isolated Indonesian units.

Beyond the radical third world, FRETILIN has found meager sympathy for its cause. Portugal, the former colonial governing power of East Timor, continues to call for UN intervention, but essentially is reconciled to Timor's incorporation into Indonesia. Among Jakarta's ASEAN neighbors, Singapore has abstained from voting on the issue in the UN, a reflection of its sensitivity to small countries being gobbled up by their larger neighbors but intends to vote with Indonesia this year. Pro-FRETILIN sentiment in liberal intellectual circles in Australia continues. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: FRETILIN's Situation and Prospects



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